History, Grammar and Spelling May Lose All Their Terrors

Man's Childhood Explained In a Picture Book for Children

ANCIENT MAN. By Hendrick Willem Van Loon. Boni & Liveright.

Reviewed by JOSEPH F. GOULD.

H. G. Wells has written two books of great value, one a history of the world and the other a book on floor games. but Prof. Van Loon has written a book which combines the merits of the two, and does it successfully. "Ancient Man" is the first volume of a series of nine which will tell the complete story of civilization. He does not make the mistake of writing in words of two syllables, but approaches the level of childhood by making his material simple and vivid.

In his introduction to his sons, Hansje and Willem, he says:

"I shall show you mysterious rivers

Hendrick Van Loon.

which seem to come from nowhere and which are doomed to reach no ultimate destination."

"I shall bring you close to dangerous precipices, hidden carefully beneath a thick overgrowth of pleasant but deceiving firmness."

"Here and there we shall leave the beaten track to scale a solitary and lonely peak towering high above the surrounding country."

"Unless we are very lucky we shall sometimes lose ourselves in a sudden and dense fog of ignorance."

A good child's book is like a circus. Adults like to take their nephews to it. There is much in this book which will appeal to older minds. Like "Gulliver's Travels," it can be read for the story or for the underlying philosophy. Prof. Van Loon has not hidden his personal equation. He cannot forbear making remarks now and then which betray his own point of view. The child will reread these passages some time with a more complete understanding. For example, he says: "As a matter of fact, civilization never remains long in the same place. It is always going somewhere, but it does not always move westward by any means. Sometimes its course points to the East or South. Often it zigzags across the map. But it keeps moving. After two or three hundred years civilization seems to say: 'Well, I have been keeping company with these particular people long enough,' and it packs up its science and its art and its music and wanders forth in search of new dreams. But no one knows whither it is bound, and that is what makes life so interesting."

Prof. Van Loon's description of the first man to enjoy cooked food and his feeling that he had reached the pinnacle of progress is very choice. A touch of satire seems to lurk in other passages. We suspect that he wishes to poison the young mind with radical doctrine. For example, he says: "The land of Phœnicia had always been a counting house without a soul. It perished because it had honored a well filled treasure chest as the highest ideal of civic pride." Is not this a hint that we are becoming too materialistic? Ought not Burleson to suppress such a book? It is subversive of the existing regime.

Something should be said about the pictures. They are simple, but color is handled with a gorgeous abandon that reminds one of Turner or Blake. They intrigue the eye and remain in the imagination long after the book is closed. Only Vachell Lindsey himself could put into words their explosive effect. They have a boom-a-laka, boom-a-laka, boom, boom, bing! quality that can never be forgotten.

Nedyelka tells Vitazko what to do

Vitàzko's Necessary Heart

THE SHOEMAKER'S APRON. A second book of Czecho-Slovak fairy tales and folk tales. Retold by Parker Fillmore. With illustrations by Jan Matulka. Harcourt, Brace & Howe.

If all the "original" fiction in the world were lost it would still be possible to work out the distinctive characteristics of each national literature by its variations on themes that are more or less common property. Mr. Fillmore explains for the sake of accuracy that some of these tales may be traced back to the Talmud or other ancient stories.

In Grimm and in French and English fairy tales may be found parallels to some of the pieces given here. But the reteller of old stories declares that in German "they have been squeezed dry of their Slavic exuberance" and in French "somewhat dandified." He has endeavored to give them in a more direct fashion, with the Czech, Moravian or Slovak flavor, as nearly as it can be retained in another tongue.

There are added a group of nursery pieces and some devil tales. The book is intended as a companion volume to Mr. Fillmore's earlier collection, "Czecho-Slovak Fairy Tales."

These lively pieces are as easy to read as a folk dance is to watch. There is much conversation and the narrative is quick-moving. A good example is "Vitazko the Victorious." This good boy is cursed with a bad mother, but he is lucky enough to find a friend in a wise woman called St. Nedyelka. Even after the hero had been cut into little bits Nedyelka saved him, thus:

"She took the pieces of the body from the bundle and washed them in the Water of Death. Then she arranged them piece by piece as they should be and they grew together until the wounds disappeared and there were not even any scars left. After that she sprinkled the body with the Water of Life and lo, life returned to Vitazko and he stood up well and healthy.

"'Ah,' he said, rubbing his eyes, I've been asleep, haven't I?'

"'Yes,' Nedyelka said. 'And but for me you would never have wakened. How do you feel, my son?'

"'All right,' Vitazko said, 'except a little strange, as if I had no heart.'

"'You have none,' Nedyelka told him. 'Your heart hangs by a string from a crossbeam in the castle.'

"She told him what had befallen him, how his mother had betrayed him and how Sharkan had cut him to pieces.

"Vitazko listened, but he could feel neither surprise nor grief nor anger nor anything, for how could he feel since he had no heart?

"'You need your heart, my son,' Nedyelka said. 'You must go after it.'"

Which proved how wise the woman was. And moreover she helped him to recover the missing heart. And so he was able to go on loving the beautiful princess, who really justified all the trouble he had taken.

Parts of Speech Have Personality Meeting Words Is an Adventure

FAIRY GRAMMAR. By J. Harold Carpenter. E. P. Dutton & Co.

EILEEN'S ADVENTURES IN WORDLAND. By Zillah Macdonald. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

Children all over the world should get up and make the most grateful bow that they know how, for two authors have ventured again into the land that Lewis Carroll discovered and returned with two amazing presents. Since that marvel of childhood "Alice in Wonderland" the children have been waiting for more lands where children were understood and where jam and playtoys had souls.

Mr. Carpenter's book, "Fairy Grammar," will banish the bogie of the child's inability to like grammar, and Zillah Macdonald's story of the little girl in Wordland will make the dictionary a land of wonders instead of the bane of childhood. Both these books are rare gems among the motley crew of writing that is put out yearly as material fit for the title "books for children." The grownup that does not react to these books never was a child, and should never have a child to bring up, for he certainly wouldn't know how to do it.

In the "Fairy Grammar" a little boy is taught the parts of speech that he refused to learn, and also the fact that grammar is a person in the guise of an elf named Ram-marg, who becomes a beautiful fairy when little boys and girls learn all about her and learn how to use her properly. There is a wealth of those memories that we all have of the days wherein we tried to distinguish between an adverb and an adjective when we read about the little boy, John Henry Arthur Percival Sparks, who found that the fairy deprived him of parts of speech when he declared that he hated them. We have all suffered agonies trying to learn about those little words that are such important trifles when we try to get along without them. Poor little John Henry became the centre of attraction in the medical world and almost the subject of investigation for a sanity commission until he obeyed the fairy Ram-marg.

The little girl that Zillah Macdonald created ventured into the land of Dictionary, forced old Lexy to take Blighty in his country as a real world and made the land interesting and colorful. All the little boys and girls who have cordially hated dictionaries will have to realize now that words are people and they have houses, families and relations all over the world. They will learn that to use a word incorrectly or to slip into a laconic way of talking and a phonetic way of spelling is to chop off some member of the word's body or to banish him to the land of perpetual sleep.

The child will discover that words have lineage older and more aristocratic than that of all kings and emperors in the world. He will visit Slangville and see the confusion and carelessness there and realize what his father means when he tells him not to use slang. He will meet all the new words whose sudden birth in the war left them without friends or relatives. It is these little words that Eileen champions, and she succeeds during her visit in admitting Blighty to real word citizenship. Everyone loved Blighty and every one will love Eileen for helping him out.

Both these authors are to be congratulated on the entertaining way in which they have solved one of the dryest problems of child education. Most children find words uninteresting and hard to pronounce, and every child finds grammar meaningless and difficult. They have succeeded in tieing adventure, fairies and exploration with these two fields, and what child does not love those three flavors of life? The mother, father or even teacher who fails to recognize these books both as text books and stories is doing a great injustice to the child whom he would caution to speak properly.

To be able to create a land of wonder and fairies out of one of the dryest subjects in the world is an achievement of merit and distinction. Alice in her adventures with the Cheshire Cat and the Mad Hatter had no more fun than did Eileen with her friends Blighty and Crazy, or John Henry Arthur Percival Sparks with his fairy Ram-marg. In these days when baby talk is discouraged and when five-year-old Arabella is supposed to talk like perfect ladies of 18 (and they, as, are no criteria), fond mothers will welcome these lands of romance created from the common clay of words and grammar.

Ruth Murray Underhill.

She Was Boss

THE WHITE MOTH. By Ruth Murray Underhill. Moffat, Yard & Co.

Hilda made up her mind that she would go into a factory and "work up" ke a man till she had a position of uthority and profit. "From one day to the next her world shifted from the white-plastered schoolroom and the vine-covered porches and the maple-shaded streets of cats and became a stretch of sun-baked yard where the flies buzzed in the June sunlight and the sound of machines burdened the air. She thought about ten-penny nails and it was morning, and she thought about cleaned bone for knife handles and it was night. And in all the little intervals she thought about Guy."

Guy had several thoughts about other things besides his boy engagement in the course of his travels. But when he got back Hilda had her chance in a rather uncommon fashion. It isn't every heroine who can be her recreant lover's business boss. And it isn't every recreant lover who can carry off the situation.

"Twenty-five lbs. No. 14 soft brass wire at 30 cents a lb.: $7.50. Ten feet ⅜ in. phosphor bronze rod at 35 cents a foot: $3.50—"

Perhaps "cents" and "feet" might be abbreviated to "cts." and "ft.," if one were determined to be very businesslike. But otherwise we shouldn't wish to see this love-in-a-factory story abbreviated by a page.

Once White Curtains, Now Gray

MEN AND STEEL. By Mary Heaton Vorse. Boni & Liveright.

Reviewed by SUSAN STEELL.

With a restraint that is amazing and admirable in a writer who is so plainly on the side of the working man as Mrs. Vorse this propagandist and reformer tells the story of the great steel strike. She does not argue nor deal in sentiment, save where the first is indicated by simple facts set down as simply, and where the second by an anecdote of human interest that wanders in here and there adds by its meagreness of detail, poignancy to the situation of women and children, these poor creatures who are in the end the prey of every strike, whether it be successful or unsuccessful from the working man's point of view.

She divides her book into four parts and the whole story is compassed in a brief 185 pages. Naturally a laconic style would have to be employed in setting forth little facts or impressions, and this style is what Mrs. Vorse uses for both. In Part I. she paints the background of the strike—Youngstown, Johnstown, Wheeling, Gary, Joliet, Steubenville. They afford a landscape, all of them, which "shudders" one's soul at the bare thought of having to live in any such sordid, slovenly environment. Against this black curtain she musters the leading figures of the great, unhappy contest, and it throws them up in sharp relief.

One of these figures is William Z. Foster, that pale, thin New Englander from Taunton, who works twenty-four hours a day, and while always swamped with documents has time to see individuals and delegations, and to hear them patiently. "Foster, who never thinks of Foster," remarks our author, who has made an idol of this labor leader.

In the chapters devoted to the strike proper Mrs. Vorse digresses to give some notion of the way "the comfortable people" live in the neighborhood of the "works," compelled to abide there for a part of the year in order to watch their own interests. Mrs. Vorse permits the reader to contrast their ways of living with the straitened and difficult ways of the miners' wives. It is the correct way to make the biggest dramatic contrast.

A few chapters of the book tell of the author's travels about the striking sections with "Mother" Jones, another of her idols. Permeating these is a ray of hope; thus this part of her book reads more cheerfully. Housewives will undoubtedly sympathize with the superhuman efforts she saw being put out everywhere she and "Mother" Jones travelled to keep clean, white muslin curtains at their windows. Alas! as the warfare between these unmatched antagonists waged more intense, Mrs. Vorse saw the curtains getting grayer and grayer, evidence of accepted defeat.

The dying strike is pictured in the same impersonal way that is noticeable in the style throughout. There are poignant scenes briefly touched upon, there are uttered now and then a few words of quiet and resignation that by their infrequency stand out as if written in letters of fire. It is difficult to decide whether the author is restrained by the fear that the issues she portrays are now historical, perhaps a trifle cold on that account, or holds herself back from an artistic motive.

When she lets herself go—but she so seldom does—she is capable of moving her readers as Hauptmann did his hearers in the appalling play "The Weavers." But Mrs. Vorse has decidedly not duplicated the German playwright's horrors.

Perhaps one would be justified in taking the opposite view to the one Mrs. Vorse dreams from the failure of the great steel strike. She pictures the Slovaks and other middle European workmen going back home to warn their countrymen against America. The items of immigration now being given out by Ellis Island authorities, so vast are these, would indicate that this warning, if it were ever given, has failed in effect.

Why Do Women Worry?

THE NERVOUS HOUSEWIFE. By Dr. Abraham Myerson. Little, Brown & Co.

Reviewed by DOROTHY BROMLEY.

We wonder what image is aroused in the mind of the reader by this title? Perhaps that of a distraught, distressed housewife wielding a broom as she scolds a wide-eyed child for asking too many questions. On the contrary, it is not particularly her type, but women of every temperament, modified by all possible circumstances, that we meet in the pages of this book. It is written by a man who knows. Dr. Abraham Myerson is visiting physician, nervous department, Boston City Hospital and Beth Israel Hospital, and assistant professor of neurology at Tufts Medical College. Despite his fund of scientific knowledge he writes so simply and clearly that he—or she—who runs may read, and so humanly that he wins the reader's friendship.

Is the housewife a victim of her own temperament; does she work too hard; is her husband to blame, or is it all the fault of society as organized to-day? First of all, Dr. Myerson explains nervousness, neurosis, neurasthenia, or whatever we choose to call it, as the result of an inner conflict, a struggle in which undesired thoughts and feelings and passions are pushed back into the subconscious, but nevertheless continue to act upon the personality. Such a struggle goes on in every human breast, but it is especially active and wearying in the nervous victim.

A woman is often the cause of her own troubles. Dr. Myerson seeks to discover the housewife to herself by recounting actual living cases of the hyper-æsthetic woman; the over-conscientious housewife, seeker of perfections; the lazy Mrs. ——, who has no purpose in life; the wilfully hysterical woman, and so on. Each one of the eleven detailed cases is a drama in itself.

It is true that the women of the past generation did all their own housework, in addition to the rearing of children. They were slaves, says Dr. Myerson, and the Emancipation Proclamation did not include them. And so are the women of to-day who have to do the same thing. Theologians and sentimentalists may eulogize poverty; but Buddha found it one of the four great evils. The poor housewife, i. e., the one who finds the family income insufficient to cover the bare necessities, is conscious of a "wall closing in, a losing battle without an end." How can she help worrying, despite philosophical advice to the contrary? The author tells of one woman who fought the battle of ill health, with too many children and a husband too sick to work; she was finally helped by a social agency, which sent her to the country to rest. Dr. Myerson sees in these agencies the only possibility of relief in such cases. Then there is the woman whose heart is bitter with discontent because she cannot have the clothes and comforts and perhaps luxuries that her neighbor has.

Married life is often positively unhappy or a humdrum affair. Dr. Myerson has diagnosed so many cases that he is able to write a good prescription. "Love and intimacy need not exclude form. Manners and morals are not exclusive of each other. If the marriage ceremony included the vow to be polite it might leave out almost everything else." To the woman he gives this perhaps bitter pill to swallow: "A woman claims equality for her virtues, yet demands a tender consideration for her weaknesses." In other words she should be a better sport and do her part to live up to a fifty-fifty agreement. To the husband he says: "Sympathy and attention if judiciously administered are of incomparable power and efficiency." And to both he offers this excellent tonic: "Marriage to be successful is based on a graceful recession of the ego in the cosmos of each of the partners." If a man and wife took a spoonful of this tonic every morning they would avoid many physical as well as mental ills.

"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Many difficulties in married life arise because men and women have no knowledge of the pyschology and physiology of the sex life. Reason and love should go together, and instinct should guide happiness.

"I am the captain of my fate, the master of my soul" will be the cry of women in the future. More and more women are knowing the satisfaction of independence in business or professional life. They will not marry except on a basis of absolute equality. Dr. Myerson acknowledges that they cannot resist the powerful instinct to marry and have children, but he is sure that an increasing number will refuse to merge their individuality wholly into that of a wife-mother. Society must be organized in some way so as to make other interests possible. And yet so wise a man as Dr. Myerson does not help us a great deal with this problem; he has only simplified cooking and community kitchens to suggest.

Some claim that Arnold Bennett knows women as no other man in the world; others would give the laurel to W. L. George. But these two gentlemen had better get acquainted with Dr. Myerson.

Before the A B C's

NURSERY SCHOOL EDUCATION. Edited by Grace Owen. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Ellen Key has pointed out that we are living in the century of the child and all races are making contributions to the study of childhood. There is a practicality about John Bull which makes him seize upon the best of all new ventures. He is not given to experiment, but he is quick to avail himself of the research of others. He is like a farmer who is conservative in his methods but eager to utilize the new varieties which Burbank has invented. The older theories of Froebel and the newer speculations of Montessori have been put upon a working basis in England.

The Board of Education has worked out regulations for Nursery Schools. They are a tangible source of pleasure and education to children in all parts of England. It is realized that education ought to begin before the school period. Miss Owen, principal of the Mother Training College, has edited a book which very vividly portrays this movement. It is based on the assumption that child study exists for the sake of the dull. Specialists in each separate branch of hygiene and pedagogy and psychology contribute chapters on Nursery Schools which show how this movement is providing for the welfare of our future citizens.

The Father of Modern Socialism

KARL MARX. By Achille Loria. Thomas Seltzer.

Reviewed by STANTON A. COBLANTZ.

"Karl Marx . . . martyr and sage . . . the emperor in the realm of mind, the Prometheus foredestined to lead the human race toward the brilliant goal which awaits it in a future not perhaps immeasurably remote"—such are the words in which Professor Loria of Turin pays tribute to the great apostle of Socialistic thought. In a brief but compact monograph the author outlines the life of Marx, summarizes his contribution to economic thought and comments critically upon his work. He makes it evident that behind many of the great social movements agitating our times is to be discerned the gigantic form of Karl Marx, a seer, an oracle and a prophet pointing with unequalled insight to the inner workings of our society, tracing the basic currents of economic growth and describing the course of evolution tending toward social rebirth. And though Professor Loria's reverence for Marx is undoubted, though he says that Marx's "Capital" will "remain for all time one of the loftiest summits ever climbed by human thought," still he does not fall into blind worship of his hero nor hesitate to bare the huge limitations as well as the vast range of Marx's accomplishments.

Professor Loria's biographical account of Marx recalls the fact that by a strange bit of irony the great enemy of capitalism "belonged to an ancient stock devoted to the accumulation of wealth, while his marriage united him to the race of German feudatories"; that as the young editor of the *Rhenish Gazette* he declared himself opposed to French Socialism, and that later, when he became heart and soul the advocate of Socialism, he endured every variety of ignominy, want and suffering in his fervent devotion to the cause. There is something pathetic in the spectacle of the greatest economist of the age, poverty stricken and in enforced exile in London, battling almost without recognition for the faith destined to alter the course of human evolution. Or, to let Professor Loria tell the story: "One after another his children died in the unwholesome dwellings of his exile and he was forced to beg from friends and comrades the scanty funds needed to pay for their burial; he and his family had to make the best of a diet of bread and potatoes; he was forced to pawn his watch and his clothing, to sell his books, to tramp the streets in search of any help that might offer; the day came when, under the lash of hunger, he was forced to contemplate seeking work as railway clerk, of placing his daughters out to service, of making them governesses or actresses, while himself retiring with his unhappy wife to dwell in the proletarian quarter of Whitechapel."

Is it any wonder then that the author terms Marx a "martyr"? Is it any wonder that his work glows with genuine admiration for the man who fought his way through such trials to a universal hearing? It does not matter what we think of the doctrines of Marx—we are led with Professor Loria to revere him as a man; we are led to recognize that in this Hercules who took up the sword against the dragon of the economic order there is the stuff out of which supreme heroes are made.

In regard to Marx's doctrines Professor Loria has many instructive things to say. He exposes huge flaws in the theory of value, one of the corner stones of Marx's thinking, and comes to the remarkable conclusion that "Marx, whose primary aim it was to be a theorist of political economy and to deal only in subsidiary fashion with the philosophy of history and technology, secured a triumphant success in those subordinate fields; whereas, in respect of the fundamental object of his thought, his work was a complete failure." Yet Professor Loria indicates that Marx's failures were great only because his successes were great; because he did nothing on a small scale. And, as already indicated, the author indulges in superlatives in referring to Marx's influence upon the future of mankind and his work as one of the pioneers of "the irresistible ascent of humanity toward a juster and better social order."

With an English Setting

THE VANITY GIRL. By Compton Mackenzie. Harper & Bros.

In the earlier phase of his career it was Compton Mackenzie's fortune to be the pet of the "literary" young people. He was held to be the interpreter of the university man of serious taste, since in his Oxford novels he drew that person in his own chosen manner. "Sylvia Scarlett" was the bolt from the blue into this world of purple patches. The literary magazines did not hesitate to call it "vulgar," and they flung all their darts of technical terminology at its picaresque character. These same critics, who so seldom seem to influence the authors they berate, will be as hostile to Mackenzie's new novel, "The Vanity Girl."

This is a story of the beautiful daughter of the secretary of the Church of England Purity Society, who, being equally aware that she is beautiful and that beauty is an asset, leaves the West Kensington home for the stage, and with a summary success marries a title. She aspires not only to be the wife of an earl but the mother of one. With the first frustration of this hope comes such a complete demoralization that she sees her husband, freed from her dominance by her own indifference, gamble away their fortune even to the manor house itself.

The war comes and her husband is killed at the front, just before she discovers she is to have a child. All the vigor of the determination which has brought her from West Kensington to her titled place reasserts itself. And when the new owner of the earl's estates asks her to marry him she accepts him on condition that he give them all back to her son. When he apprehensively wonders, "Suppose you and I have children," she answers so perfectly in character, "Well, they'll be half brothers and sisters to the sixth Earl of Clarehaven, which will be quite enough for them, won't it?"

There is the episode of the man who had money, influence, everything, but also gross ugliness, who wishes to set up one of the ladies of the chorus in a flat. But when he goes to meet her there he finds instead a chimpanzee the lady has smuggled in to take her place, it being expected that he, on calling softly, "Are you there, Lily?" will get hit with a cocoanut—as Lily feels he deserves to be.

All of which has enough of the absurd in it, and of the trivial. The book remains a gay, facile and decorative picture of that fraction of our society which supplies anecdotes to the clubrooms of civilization, although its lighter tone gives way at last to the more ominous, sinister reflection

The Latest Martian Story

THUVIA, MAID OF MARS. By Edgar Rice Burroughs. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co.

From start to finish "Thuvia, Maid of Mars," is a story that travels with breathless and breakneck speed. Fourth and latest of Edgar Rice Burroughs's Martian series, it gives to any one who has not read his books an excellent idea of them all. The abduction of the Princess Thuvia by a lover whom she has spurned, her pursuit and rescue by Cathoris of Helium—Martian son of John Carter of Virginia—battles between green monsters and phantom bowmen and white apes, flying craft and hypnotic miracles, prowling banths and padded throats—all these contrasting elements are woven into an enthralling tale of hairbreadth escapes. "Thuvia" makes no pretence at being literary, but it will appeal to all lovers of mad adventure—even to those who are bored by the most extravagant "movies."

An anniversary edition of the complete works of Thomas Hardy, in commemoration of the novelist's eightieth birthday this year, is announced for early publication by Harpers. This will be the first time that all of Hardy's works have been collected by one publisher and brought out in a uniform binding. Recently a price of $3,000 was put on a complete collection of Hardy first editions.